

FIRST RIGOLETTO SUITE

National Dance and Folk Tunes

Arranged for Piano by LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

- I. Ballad
- II. Minuet
- III. Perigordino



Saint Louis

ADAPTED AND EDITED WITH INSTRUCTIONS AS TO
INTERPRETATION AND METHOD OF STUDY

By LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, GENERAL INFORMATION
AND GLOSSARY

By EMERSON WHITHORNE

FIRST RIGOLETTO SUITE.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—GIUSEPPE VERDI.

*Born at Le Roncole, Italy, October 10, 1813.
Died at Milan, Italy, January 27, 1901.*

IN the Duchy of Parma, Italy, near the town of Busseto, there is a little village called Le Roncole. If we journey back a little more than a century, to the year 1812, we find living in the village of Roncole a poor innkeeper and his wife named Carlo and Luigia Verdi. Beside their inn stood a tiny shop where Carlo and his good wife tried to eke out a much-needed additional income by the sale of sugar, coffee, matches and such small provender. One day of each week was spent by the honest Carlo in walking to Busseto to buy supplies for his store from the wealthy merchant Barezzi; having obtained these necessary articles he would plod homewards with his two heavily laden baskets.

Such was the life of the parents of one of the greatest composers of opera who ever lived—Giuseppe Verdi. Like the mighty German operatic composer Wagner, he was born in the year 1813. In spite of poverty his father bought a spinet for him when he was only seven years old, and he had his first music lessons with the organist of the local church, one Baistrocchi, who, after having instructed the clever boy for a year, dismissed him with the remark that he could teach him no more.

Verdi was ten years of age when he was given the position of local church organist, thus succeeding his former teacher. But Carlo Verdi feared that the general education of his son was being neglected, and he was much too poor to send him to school. There lived at Busseto a cobbler, a friend of the family, who offered to board and lodge the boy and send him to the best school in the town, all for the princely sum of about six cents a day. It was so arranged. In the meantime the youth kept his organ position in his native town, walking there each Sunday morning, performing the Sunday Service and returning in the evening.

After two years of schooling, the good merchant Barezzi, the same from whom Verdi's father bought his wares, took an interest in Giuseppe's musical talent; he employed him in his business, at the same time arranging that his music study should be continued under the organist of the cathedral and conductor of the Philharmonic Concerts, Ferdinando Provesi. Provesi was an excellent composer with a sound knowledge of the theory of music. Under him Verdi studied until his sixteenth year. He composed some pieces for the church service in order to be of assistance to his master, who was overburdened with work, and although none of these early compositions have been published, he undoubtedly learned very much from these youthful attempts at music making.

Verdi's first real unhappiness was caused by the refusal of the Conservatoire at Milan to accept him as a pupil. He had been supplied with money for lessons by the merchant Barezzi, but the authorities at Milan considered that he did not show particular talent. Still he arranged to study with Lavigna, the conductor at the famous Scala Opera House, remaining with this master two years. He then returned to Busseto and soon married the eldest daughter of his friend and protector, Barezzi.

After remaining in Busseto two years he moved with his young wife and his two sons to Milan; this was in 1838. Verdi hoped that in the leading musical city of Italy he might find employment in his profession of operatic composer. There he soon had his opera *Oberto* performed, and even though it was not a great success it brought to him an order for three operas at the price of \$670 apiece, with a share in the royalties. This brings us to the year 1840, so full of sadness for Verdi. He tells the story in his own words:

"But now terrible misfortunes crowded upon me. At the beginning of April my child falls ill, the doctors cannot understand what is the matter, and the dear little creature goes off quickly in his mother's arms. Moreover, a few days after the other child is taken ill, and he too dies, and in June my young wife is taken from me by a most violent inflammation of the brain, so that on the 19th of June I saw the third coffin carried out of my house. In a very little over two months, three persons so very dear to me

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had disappeared forever. I was alone, alone! My family had been destroyed; and in the very midst of these trials I had to fulfill my engagement and write a comic opera! "*Un Giorno di Regno*" proved a dead failure. Embittered by the failure of my opera, I despaired of finding any comfort in my art, and resolved to give up composition. To that effect I wrote Dr. Pasetti (whom I had once met since the failure of the opera), asking him to persuade Merelli to tear up the agreement."

This was indeed sufficient trial and tragedy for a young man of twenty-seven. The fates, however, were soon more kind. On the 9th of March, 1842, his opera *Nabucco* was produced at the Scala, in Milan, with great success and he was fairly launched on his career as an operatic composer. During the next fifty years no less than twenty-six operas came from his pen, of which at least eight have established themselves firmly in the repertoire of the leading opera houses throughout the world. What opera-goer does not know *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, *Aida* or *Otello*!

In 1844 Verdi married Signorina Streponi, a leading soprano who had taken the rôle of *Abigaille* in his opera *Nabucco*. Although honors were heaped upon him—he had been elected senator and made Marquese di Busseto—he lived the year round in his villa at S. Agata, near the town of Busseto; there he enjoyed the quiet life of a gentleman farmer, taking great pleasure in the growing of vegetables and the planting of trees. When he died in 1901, he left the greater part of his fortune for the establishment of a home for aged and infirm musicians.

GENERAL INFORMATION: The first performance of *Rigoletto* took place at the *Gran Teatro La Fenice* in Venice, March 11th, 1851; it heralded the beginning of the second period of Verdi's artistic development. *Trovatore* and *Traviata* followed two years later and were hardly less enthusiastically received. Indeed these operas, all produced within a period of two years, firmly established Verdi's name as the leading operatic composer of Italy.

Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'Amuse* was used for the theme of *Rigoletto* by the librettist, Piave, in spite of the French author's strenuous objections. It is true that alterations had to be made in the names of the characters and the title of the opera in order to meet with the approval of the police censor at Venice, who did not care to have exploited under his protection the frailties of Francis the First. These small but difficult details having been adjusted, Verdi set forth for his native town of Busseto and after forty days of incessant writing returned to Venice with the completed opera, ready for production at the opening of the joyous carnival season.

THE STORY: *Rigoletto*, the buffoon or court jester to the pleasure-loving Duke of Mantua, is the father of the beautiful Gilda. His love for his daughter is the only noble characteristic of a man whose moral nature is as misshapen as his deformed body; he protects her and cherishes her in the midst of all the dangers of life at the ducal court.

The first act opens in the town of Mantua. Festivities are being held in the palace,—the glitter of jewels, the glow of thousands of candles casts a sheen of light over the assemblage of cavaliers and their ladies. The Duke appears; he has been plotting with Rigoletto to obtain the favor of the daughter of Monterone. The venomous jester taunts the noble count when he is placed under arrest at the Duke's command. As he is being dragged away he invokes the punishment of heaven upon the insolent buffoon.

In the second scene Rigoletto is discovered in the darkness; he is standing before his house in a deserted street. He enters the courtyard, meeting his daughter Gilda, as is his wont under the cover of darkness. Imagine his dismay when he discovers the Duke approaching in the guise and garb of a student;—this false master winning the affections of the child of the crippled clown. Almost at once the court is full of masked courtiers who have determined to assist Count Monterone in the punishment of Rigoletto for his insolence. They make a pretense of abducting the daughter of the Count and desire Rigoletto's aid. They blindfold and mask him and then make him the unconscious conspirator in carrying his own daughter to the castle of the Duke.

Discovering this trick all too late, he hires a professional assassin to kill the Duke. In the meantime he has disguised his daughter in male attire to make possible her escape to Verona. He even brings her before the murderer's house so that she may witness the undoing of the Duke; but hearing of the plot against the nobleman's life, who even then sleeps within the cottage, she rushes forward to warn him and is struck down by the hired assassin. Still we have not reached the end of all these miseries, for Rigoletto is gloating over the sack, which he imagines contains the body of the wicked Duke, until he suddenly hears that still animate individual singing sweetly in the loft of the assassin's abode, when

he tears open the rough sacking and by the fitful flashes of lightning beholds his own daughter. There in those lurid surroundings, she dies, the object of vengeance. Thus was Rigoletto, the buffoon or court jester to the Duke of Mantua, punished for his wickedness.

I. BALLAD.

LESSON: This ballad is the first solo in the opera; it is sung by the Duke of Mantua after a short conversation with the courtier Borsa. In the original score the solo is in the key of A flat major (for tenor voice), while in this Adaptation it has been transposed a half-tone lower, thus bringing it in the key of G major. The words give us an insight into the fickle nature of the Duke and have no particular value except the definite characterization of one of the leading actors in the drama.

The student should notice that the bass is played lightly and detached throughout this movement. Each eighth-note chord is virtually given the value of a sixteenth when played in this *staccato* manner; moreover there are eighth rests on the second and fifth eighth of all measures except m. 33. The accents in the right hand on the weak beats of measures 1, 5, 9, 11, 23, 25, 28 and 31 are characteristic of this dancing rhythm.

It will be remarked in measures 2, 6, 10, 17, 18, etc., where melody notes are repeated, that the editor has indicated a change of fingers on those notes; this is done in order to obtain clear articulation and variety of tone color. The fingering of the left-hand thirds in measures 23-24 is extremely comfortable for even the smallest hand.

II. MINUET.

The minuet follows immediately after the Duke's solo in the opera. The cavaliers and their ladies dance the stately measure at the back of the stage while the Duke addresses with gallantry the Countess of Ceprano, the daughter of Count Monterone. The key has been altered from A flat major to C major. The cadences in this charming dance have a strong flavor of Haydn and the early Mozart; note particularly measures 7-8 and 23-24. This Minuet is intentionally naïve and rococo in character.

The interpretation of the first four measures gives the clue to the whole movement. The right-hand part and the top voice of the left-hand part give the eighth-notes on the second and third beats of the first measure with what is frequently and falsely called a *portamento*. Actually the notes are not played *staccato*, but each receives an added impulse; the notes are separated but not short, thus the phrasing is in no way disturbed. The first eighth-note in the right-hand part and upper voice of the left-hand part in m. 2 receives a slight accent followed by a *decrescendo* on the succeeding eighth-note and quarter-note. Now the extreme *legato* quality of measures 3-4 should be observed, except for the first eighth-note which is *staccato*, this answering phrase to be given with the utmost smoothness. Observe how the phrase stated in measures 9-10 gradually rises higher and higher; thus it reaches E in m. 9, F sharp in m. 11, and G in m. 13. There should naturally be a *crescendo* as these phrases build up to a climax, each phrase reaching a higher dynamic level. The student will remark that measures 17-24 inclusive are identical with measures 1-8 inclusive.

III. PERIGORDINO.

After the Minuet the Duke and the Countess depart leaving the company of lords and ladies on the stage. There is a short general conversation among the gentlemen, in which Rigoletto joins, after which the quaint Perigordino is danced.

The Perigordino—in French, Perigourdine—is an old country dance of France, taking its name from Perigord where it is most danced. It is in six-eight measure and is sometimes accompanied by singing. In this Adaptation the original key has been retained. It is interesting to note how the phrases always begin on the second or weak half of the measure and end on the first or strong half of the measure. An accent is given at the beginning of each phrase to counteract the normally weak quality of the second pulse. The student must realize the value of the break in the phrasing after the ascending third in the right hand of the opening half measure, and measures 2, 4, 6, etc.

The phrases are repeated without any alteration in the endings: See measures 1-4 and 5-8, also measures 25-28 and 29-32. Even the second theme (measures 9-16) is repeated without melodic or harmonic change in measures 17-24. The monotonous semi-detached character of the left-hand part is worthy of note; it moves along with a regular rhythmic marking of the strong and weak beats, supporting the melody with most simple harmonies. The phrasing of measures 9-16 (and the repetition of this phrase) is to be carefully observed by the student.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: The aim of the editors is to have every department of their work as perfect and complete as possible, and they have been governed by this principle in making the annotations to the Educational Adaptations. Although nothing superfluous has been included, the teacher must use discretion as to the amount of text material that the student is capable of assimilating at the time.

GLOSSARY.

NAMES

Giuseppe Verdi,	pronounced,	Joo-sép-pě Vair-dée.
Le Roncole,	"	Lě Rōn-cō-lě.
Busseto,	"	Boo-sět-tō.
Barezzi,	"	Bă-rě-tsēe.
Baistrocchi,	"	Bă-ēs-trō-kēe.
Nabucco,	"	Nă-boo-kō,
Rigoletto,	"	Rě-gō-lět-tō.
Traviata,	"	Tră-vě-ă-tă.
Trovatore,	"	Trō-vă-tō-rě.
Gran Teatro La Fenice,	"	Grăn Tă-ă-trō Lă Fě-nēe-chě.
Piave,	"	Pě-ă-vě.
Monterone,	"	Mōn-tě-rō-ně.
Perigordino,	"	Pě-rě-gor-dēe-no.
Perigourdine,	"	Pě-rě-goor-dēen.

TERMS

allegretto,	pronounced,	āl-lě-grět-tō, rather lively but not as lively as allegro.
con eleganza,	"	kōn ăl-ă-găn-tsă, with elegance.
sempre staccato e leggiero,	"	sēm-prě stāk-kă-tō ă lěd-jě-ă-rō, always detached and lightly.
cresc. (crescendo),	"	crě-shěn-dō, increasing in tone volume.
con brio,	"	kōn brē-ō, with spirit.
tempo di minuetto,	"	tēm-pō dē mēe-noo-ět-tō, in the time of a minuet.
allegro,	"	āl-lă-grō, lively and rather quickly.
Le Roi s'Amuse,	"	Lă Rwă să-mūse, the king enjoys himself.
staccato,	"	stāk-kă-tō, short, detached.
portamento,	"	por-tă-měn-tō, gliding from one note to another.
decrescendo,	"	dě-crě-shěn-dō, gradually diminishing in tone power.
legato,	"	lă-gă-tō, smoothly, connected.

Without octaves, without pedal.

EDUCATIONAL ADAPTATIONS

Opera Series

FIRST RIGOLETTO SUITE

I. Ballad

Adapted and edited by Leopold Godowsky.

GIUSEPPE VERDI.

Allegretto. ♩ = 80 - 98

p con eleganza

sempre staccato e leggerissimo

Measures 1-16 are shown, with fingerings and dynamics indicated.

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17 18 19 20

21 *cresc.* 22 *con brio* 23 24 *mf*

25 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

33 *f* 34 35 36 37

II. Minuet

Tempo di minuetto. ♩. : 88 - 96

The musical score for 'II. Minuet' is presented in four systems, each containing two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Tempo di minuetto. ♩. : 88 - 96'. The piece is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings. The measures are numbered 1 through 12. The first system contains measures 1-3, the second system contains measures 4-6, the third system contains measures 7-9, and the fourth system contains measures 10-12. The score is a single melodic line for piano, with no accompaniment.

13 14 15

16 17 18

19 20 21

22 23 24

Without octaves, without pedal, without bass clef.

III. Perigordino

Allegro. ♩. : 182 - 152

The musical score for 'III. Perigordino' is written for piano. It is in 2/4 time and marked 'Allegro'. The tempo range is given as 182 - 152. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into four systems, each containing four measures. The measures are numbered 1 through 16. The right hand plays a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The left hand plays a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The score includes fingerings (1-5) and dynamics (p).

